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Two Poems of Childhood

(Reprinted by Request.)

Hello, Pop!

His photograph! Our joy and pride—
The picture of our boy who died!
I seem to hear, 'midst tears that drop
Upon its face, his loving call
Come ringing down the darkened hall
To give me greeting: "Hello, Pop!"

It seems but yesterday he died—
But yesterday we stood beside
His bed and watched his eyelids drop
To sleep and wake in endless day—
But yesterday I heard him say
With dying accents: "Goodbye, Pop!"

Last night I dreamed he stood again
With face pressed to the windowpane
And watched to see my motor stop;
That when he heard me at the door
He quickly toddled 'cross the floor
And met me, shouting: "Hello, Pop!"

Sometimes, when daylight fades to gloom
And ghostly shadows fill the room
I feel again the swelling joy;
For, from the shadows round about,
I hear once more his joyful shout
In boyish tones: "I'm papa's boy!"

When, after death's cold, chilly hands
Have loosed the last of earthly bands
And caused life's weary load to drop,
I'll feel it is supremest joy
To meet, at heaven's gate, my boy,
And hear his welcome: "Hello, Pop!"

Baby's Shoes

Lay them away, stained by a mother's tears;
Precious keepsakes through the coming years.
The baby's shoes, the tips now slightly worn—
Their spring heels frayed by running o'er the floor—
Lay them away, with heartstrings wrenched and torn,
For baby's feet will wear them never more.

But through the gloom of all the coming years
The baby's shoes will ope the fount of tears.

Lay them away, and sacred memory
Will cluster 'round them 'till his face we see—

Until in robes of angels' purest white,
With harp swept by his little fingers blest,
His smile shall banish all the gloom of night
And call us to his Father's endless rest.

Those little shoes! Through all the coming years
They'll speak of him, and fill our eyes with tears.

Lay them away! No more will baby feet
Run to the gate with pattering music sweet.

Upon the shores of brighter, endless day
He stands. He smiles and waves his hand,
And after we have quit life's weary way

We'll greet our baby in that better land.
And so we'll keep these shoes through all the years
That they may banish all our doubts and fears.

TOUCHED A VERY POPULAR CHORD

This department's protest, in the issue of April 13, against the continued "highfalutin" tactics of the household economists, seems to have struck a popular chord. The vast majority of people in this country have to figure closely in the matter of household expenses in order to come out even, and they have neither the money nor the time to follow the directions of the eminent kitchen artists who compile the menus for the magazines. Letters are beginning to arrive endorsing this department's protest. Two of them are here given as samples:

Mrs. H. M. Prince, of Pattison, Miss., "a workingman's wife," writes as follows:

"I particularly like your department in The Commoner of April 13 entitled 'Just Thoughts.' I have often thought the magazine writers ought to know that their written pages are too expensive for the purses of the people they are supposed to be written for. I am a workingman's wife, and I know that most of the supposed helps are usually no help at all. What they usually call for is seldom, if ever, found in the workingman's home for the reason that he is never able to pay for them. And the 'saving' often explained causes a much greater outlay to go into the 'saving' than the scraps and left-

overs are worth. It mystifies me that these magazine writers can not see this. You are quite right in saying that the average workingman's wife 'is the best cook, the best manager and the best household economist in the world.'"

J. H. McKalip, of Rew, McKean county, Pa., also commends this department's protest. He writes as follows:

"I wish to thank you for your poem entitled 'A Wail From a Working Man,' and also for your article, 'Just Thoughts.' I have been looking for a number of years to find some one with 'sand' enough to make reply to those persons who dish up a breakfast, dinner and supper, on paper, for the workingman. I have often thought of answering and asking them to put up three meals a day for the family of the man who gets \$1.50 per day, and has six in the family. How could they meet all the grocery, clothing, doctor and rent bills? I would like to see your article extensively copied."

The people have had a surfeit of expert advice from household economists of the Parloa school. What we want now is something practical.

Let us, for instance, take a typical condition and see how it may best be confronted:

Here is a workingman and his fam-

ily, consisting of a wife and four children. The eldest child is a boy, aged 16. The youngest is a girl aged 2. The other two, a boy aged 5 and a girl aged 8. The father must be at work at 7 o'clock in the morning, and he earns an average of \$10 a week the year round—and that is a pretty high average. The boy is an apprentice and earns no more than his clothing. The five-year old and the eight-year old go to school. The wife must do all of her own household work, cooking, baking, washing, take care of the baby and get the two school children ready for school, which takes up at 9 o'clock and which is twelve blocks from the house.

We would give a pretty penny to see Miss Parloa, or any other of the magazine economists, confronting a situation like this. They would have to get up about 5:30 in the morning, get breakfast for the father and son and then put up two lunches calculated to allay the hunger of two healthy stomachs at noon. Then they would have to wash and dress the two children for school, take care of the baby, sweep and dust the cottage, do a lot of sewing, patching and darning in the afternoon. One day a week would be taken up with the family washing, and another day with the family ironing. About 5 o'clock in the evening she would have to begin getting supper—the magazine economists call it "dinner"—and she must not only make it fit the appetites of three hard-working adults, but the appetites of two lusty children and a baby. In all this work she must keep the children amused and out of mischief, and satisfy all appetites on what is left out of \$10 a week after paying all other expenses—rent, clothing, medicines, doctors, etc., etc.

That the average workingman's wife does all this—and she does it—is nothing less than a miracle. The magazine economists of the Parloa school couldn't come within seeing distance of it. Before they had been at it two weeks they would have the husband's wages mortgaged for six months in advance. These magazine menus "for a family of five" are usually figured on the basis of feeding five dyspeptics who do not eat enough to keep the average workingman's child from crying for a piece of bread and butter between meals.

If some magazine economist will offer a rational, reasonably safe rule for meeting the condition above outlined, seven million workingmen, and seven million wives of workingmen, will rise up and call her blessed, and when the magazine economist dies she will be mourned as no prince, potentate or president was ever mourned, and the monument erected above her grave will be so high that it will make the Washington monument look like a hole in the ground.

Brain Leaks

Love laughs at jokesmiths. It is a wise husband that knows what to do at housecleaning time.

The trouble with some reformers is that they carry too many side lines.

We would rather be the dog of some men than one of their children. The real optimist often looks for the worst of it in order to make the best of it.

Our idea of genuine bravery in civil life is to be the first man to wear a straw hat.

A whole lot of married men reserve all their clever stories and good nature for use at the club.

A Boston scientist has gone to the rescue of pie, and has made his defense about two columns long. We can defend it in about six bites if given proper opportunity.

A lot of men who can sit for two hours on the hot "bleachers" at a ball game and never utter a protest, are worn out after an hour in a cushioned pew in a cool church. Funny, isn't it?